Urdu Studies
An international, peer-reviewed, bilingual research journal
ISSN: 2583-8784 (Online)
Vol. 5 | Issue 1 | Year 2025
Pages: 226-238

Negotiation, Intervention, and Representation: Understanding Rajinder Singh Bedi's Cinetopia

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Abstract. In the years succeeding Indian Independence, films attained the status of a populist form through which the ideals of realism and progressivism could be brought to the masses. Rajinder Singh Bedi was an Indian writer aligned with the Progressive Writers' Movement, who worked in the Indian Film Industry as a director, screenwriter and dialogue writer. His stories represent human personality and psyche in their true form, exposing the individual and society. Complex relationships are explored in a meaningful and eloquent manner in his stories which are purported to be some of the finest pieces of Urdu fiction. He was the screenwriter and dialogue writer for some of the most popular films of his time such as *Abhimaan, Anupama, Madhumati, Devdas,* and *Anuradha*. In 1954, he collaborated with Balraj Sahani to form a company called Cine Cooperative whose first film, *Garam Coat* was based on Bedi's eponymous short story which highlighted the plight of the lower class struggling with an economic crisis. His first directorial venture, *Dastak* was based on his radio play *Naql-e-Makāni* (Moving to a New House) and explored a topic which was most unusual for its time: a newlywed couple moves unwillingly into a house located in a red-light area.

Bedi mixed humour with introspection and reflection, to create characters that can be found on the streets of India even today. This paper aims to understand and highlight the picture of life and man as it emerges in the films of Rajinder Singh Bedi. He has been able to capture the complex correlation between the Indian man and his socio-cultural, religious and political beliefs with dexterity. This paper will attempt to analyse the representation of realism in Bedi's works and the range of emotions and sensibility that his works display.

Keywords. Progressive, Realism, Socialism, Reforms, Indian cinema, Urdu literature, PWA.

Included in UGC-CARE List since October 2021
Published on August 15, 2025
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Introduction

Cinema is the most populist form through which the ideals of realism and progressivism can be brought to the masses. Rajinder Singh Bedi (1915-1984) was an Urdu-Punjabi writer aligned with the Progressive Writers' Movement, who worked in the Hindi-Urdu film industry as director, screenwriter and dialogue writer. He worked as a screenwriter and dialogue writer for some of the most popular films of his time such as *Abhimaan, Anupama, Madhumati, Devdas,* and *Anuradha*. In 1954, he collaborated with Balraj Sahani to form a company called Cine Cooperative whose first film, *Garam Coat* was based on Bedi's short story of the same name, and highlighted the plight of the lower class struggling with economic crises. His first directorial venture, *Dastak* was based on his radio play *Naql-e Makāni* (*Moving to a New House*) and explored a subject which was most unusual for its time: a newlywed couple moves unwillingly into a house located in an area predominantly inhabited by sex-workers. Another notable film directed by him was *Ānkhon Dekhi* which told the story of a Gandhi-like leader who propagated the ideals of non-violence.

Bedi mixes humour with introspection and reflection to create familiar characters whom we can perhaps meet as we walk down the streets, even today. His stories expose the true form of human personality and psyche, disclosing the innermost sentiments of an individual and his society. Complex relationships are explored in a meaningful and eloquent manner in his stories which are purported to be some of the finest pieces of Urdu fiction. Bedi sensitively captures the complex correlation between the Indian man and his socio-cultural, religious and political environment. This paper reads the films of Rajinder Singh Bedi to understand his depictions and projections of man in his socio-cultural and political environment. It will analyse representations of realism in Bedi's works and the range of emotions and sensibilities that his films display.

Negotiation, Intervention, and Representation: Understanding Rajinder Singh Bedi's Cinetopia

> We believe that the new literature of India must deal with the basic social backwardness and political subjection. All that drags us down to passivity, inaction and unreason, we reject as reactionary. All that arouses in us the critical spirit, which examines institutions and customs in the light of reason, which helps us to act, to organise ourselves, to transform, we accept as progressive. (Pradhan26)

This is how the first Progressive Writers' Manifesto, written in 1935 by Mulk Raj Anand described the new literature of India.

Cinema has played a key role in moulding opinions and reinforcing values over the years and has had an enduring relationship with social realism, questioning and reflecting upon issues that need to be addressed in society. From Harischandra Sakharam Bhatavdekar (the exact date of the screening remains unknown; the first film Bhatavdekar directed himself was premiered in 1899), the first person to set up an open-air cinema in India where films based on circus animals were screened (celebrated today as a pioneer of documentary cinema in the country) to the present time when the star and not the content sells, cinema in India has grown and evolved tremendously, over the years. The Progressive Writers' Movement, and the Indian Peoples' Theatre Association, rooted in Marxism, had deep and lasting influences on Hindi-Urdu and Bengali cinema.

New Cinema/New Wave Cinema rose out of a shared post-imperial or post-colonial consciousness in different parts of the world. It was focused upon the common man and the struggles of the working-class. Inspired by Nehru's socialist outlook, the filmmakers of independent India too began incorporating socialist and realist themes in their films. Independent India pursued the dream of a socialist society where ideals of equality, justice, and peace fired the imagination of the common man. This New India was seeking to rediscover herself through principles of honesty, community, hard work, justice and equality. Filmmakers also adopted these themes intending to create a politically, economically and culturally stable and balanced society, and thus, rose the New Wave in Indian Cinema.

Bimal Roy, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Satyajit Ray, Ritwik Ghatak, and Mrinal Sen were directors who championed the cause of the common man in Hindi and Bengali cinema with serious content based on real-life scenarios. Their films represent the New Wave Cinema of India, inspired also by Italian Neorealism.[1] Films like Roy's *Do Bigha Zamin* (1953), Khwaja Ahmad Abbas' *Shahar aur Sapna (*1963), Ritwik Ghatak's *Chinnamul* (1950), Satyajit Ray's *Mahanagar* (1963), and Chetan Anand's *Neecha Nagar* (1946) borrowed from socialist and realist literature of the times and mapped the changing socio-political climate of the nation. As the noted film critic Alexandre Astruc observed:

> ...cinema is quite simply becoming a means of expression, just as all the other arts have been before it and in particular painting and the novel. After having been successively a fairground attraction, an amusement analogous to boulevard theatre, or a means of preserving the images of an era, it is

[1] Films which address the troubled economic and moral conditions of post-World War II Italy, including, and not limited to, poverty, oppression, injustice and desperation of the common man.

gradually becoming a language (Hoskins 5).

Neecha Nagar (1946) became a pioneering effort in bringing social realism to Indian cinema and paved the way for the establishment of what is today called parallel cinema. It was an adaptation of Maxim Gorky's 1902 play *The Lower Depths*. This film explored the chasm between the rich and the poor, and it went on to become the only Indian film to be ever awarded a Palme d'Or- the highest recognition at the Cannes Film Festival. Film historian and writer, Iqbal Masud has rightly said that the forties laid the foundations of Indian Cinema's themes and ideas. He sees the forties as the prelude to the golden fifties, whose awareness of themes remained unequalled till the eighties. The studio era of the forties also helped define the Indian nation, a definition that at the beginning of the decade seemed difficult, if not impossible, considering the state in which the nation was left after its independence and partition by the imperial powers-completely devoid of resources and strong agency (Moini 10).

Premchand was one of the earliest progressives to foray into cinema with the film *The Mill Mazdoor* which was banned by the censor board and pulled out of theatres prematurely. Premchand's successors went on to storm the bastions of the Indian film industry, replacing comedies and melodramas with a new content charged with social consciousness, purpose, and anger. By 1943, film studios, theatres, coffee houses, and newspaper offices in Bombay began to be frequented by progressives like Khwaja Ahmad Abbas, Sahir Ludhianvi, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Mehboob Khan, Rajinder Krishan, Inder Raj Anand, Sa'adat Hassan Manto, Ismat Chugtai, Kaifi Azmi and Jan Nisar Akhtar amongst others. They went on to write plays for Prithvi theatre, become film publicists, lyricists, story writers, screenplay and dialogue writers, and employed the best of their minds to encourage progressive thought in a way that reflected the demands of a changing nation which had just come out of the shadows of a bloody partition. Progressive thought pulsated through films and songs to provide a renewed vitality to Indian cinema. However, by the end of the 1960s, the gaps began to show as the country was under the clutches of raging inflation, unchecked unemployment, and crony capitalism.

Rajinder Singh Bedi arrived on the Indian film scene at this time, believing that films should not merely reflect the realities of ordinary life but penetrate below the surface to reveal the human psyche and truths. Not everything was as easy as it seemed though; writers were paid poorly even for the best of their books by their publishers and most established writers like Manto and Ludhianvi wrote for films as a way to earn better. Bedi remarked:

I came to films as a matter of despair simply because there was

> nothing else to do. It was a matter of earning a livelihood. I didn't come with the attitude that all these people were churning foolishness. (Mahfil 133-158)

Bedi might have joined the films unwillingly but he gradually became actively involved with the Indian cinema, writing dialogues and screenplays of over 27 films. His stint with cinema began in 1943 when he joined a studio called Maheshwari Films, however, he soon returned to All India Radio and did not return to the film industry until after the Partition.

He received his first screen credit for writing the dialogues of the film *Badi Behen* in 1949 and went on to receive greater recognition for his second film *Dāgh* in 1952 which established him as a credible dialogue writer. In 1954, he collaborated with Amar Kumar, Geeta Bali and others to establish a company called Cine Cooperative whose first venture was a film titled *Garam Kot*, based on Bedi's story of the same name, which was awarded the Filmfare Best Story Award. Bedi went on to write dialogues for some of the most memorable Hindi films of all times such as *Mirza Ghalib* (1954), *Devdas* (1955), *Madhumatī* (1958), *Anuradhā* (1960), *Anupamā* (1966), and *Abhimān* (1973). He made his directorial debut in 1970 with the Hindi classic *Dastak* starring Sanjeev Kumar and Rehana Sultana, based on his radio play *Naql-e Makānī*. The film received several awards and reinforced Bedi's image as a serious filmmaker in parallel cinema. In the following decade, he went on to direct three more films- *Phāgun* (1973), *Nawab Saḥib* (1978), and *Ānkhon Dekhī* (1978).

Bedi is a writer of the masses; his stories draw portraits of everyday life. Despite a relatively smaller literary oeuvre, he has been able to articulate the struggles of the middle class by highlighting the minutest details of various aspects of socio-cultural, political and spiritual existence. His films present characters in a low-key manner, and usually revolve around a single incident which serves to highlight the protagonist's dilemmas. By the 1970s Hindi films had become notorious for their stereotypes and fixed formulas:

> We see a constant replication of class antagonisms; family structures and gender roles being emphasized as formulaic hits. And given popular cinema's preoccupation with the norm, the central character is more often than not – a straight man, North Indian and upper caste – the very person that socially and politically dominates the society. All the other characters often are just sideline elements to help forward the narrative, but it's the hero's story that remains pivotal (Garg 1).

Bedi championed the cause of the lower and middle class by depicting the protagonist as a member of the working-class community. His stories

are universal, based on common human desires and aspirations. An excellent example of this is his film *Garam Coat* which chronicles the struggles of a postal clerk trying to meet the financial needs of his family. He draws our sympathy to the plight of a lower-level government employee through the protagonist's introspection into his struggle to balance the various expenses which need to be met on his pittance of a monthly income. *Ānkhoṉ Dekhī* deals with untouchability, a subject that is relevant even today. The film portrays a romantic relationship between a Brahmin man and a Dalit woman; set in 1930, it is directly inspired by Gandhian ideals of a casteless society and is a political commentary on the need to abolish caste-based discrimination. It holds much significance as a film which deals with the fate of Gandhian values in contemporary India, an issue which remained untouched by other filmmakers of the time.

Through his narratives, Bedi compels the viewer to examine the systemic reasons behind such circumstances in the lives of common working-class people. Bedi does not offer any solutions but the viewer is obligated to reflect upon the socio-cultural and political motives which contribute to the lamentable situation of the lower- and middle-class population. His stories are ageless, based as they are on universal human emotions and issues, and are as relevant today as they were in the heydays of social realism.

In his award-winning film *Dastak*, Bedi focuses on an issue that concerns several million common citizens of Bombay even today - the housing crisis. The story revolves around a married couple (Hamid and Salma) who move into a house which was formerly owned by a courtesan. Their life is made miserable by their neighbours who think that they too are engaged in the same profession. Even as the wife is harassed mentally and physically, they are unable to move to another house because of their inability to pay higher rent. Bedi's use of symbolism in this film is especially notable; he uses the couple's pet bird to draw parallels to Salma's situation in life. Like the bird, Salma too is trapped within a cage i.e. the four walls of her house. Both of them are unable to escape, as Hamid says, "*Bāhar saiṉkaron bāz, shikre… koi bhi khā jāye*" ("There are several birds of prey in the outside world. Any of them can prey on her"). The symbol of a caged bird is not new in cinema (and poetry), always representing a trapped person, however, Bedi uses this symbol to show that sometimes life within confines is safer than a life of freedom. The characters have been drawn with much sensitivity; they are neither in complete control of their lives nor can they break free of the shackles of their destiny.

Both Salma and Hamid are complex individuals with feelings and troubles of their own. It is through their characters that the issue of gender

roles and performativity is also explored. Salma has learnt singing from her father who was a classical singer in their village; when she innocently practices her singing in the new house, the neighbourhood mistakes her for a courtesan as the only women who can be heard singing in the area are those who do so to please their male customers. Hamid forbids her singing, taking away her only source of joy in the new city as he is afraid that her singing will convince people that she too is a courtesan. This is a subtle comment on social stereotypes and on how society perceives arts and artists based on their gender; the same classical music practised by Salma's father, a man, gets him acclaim and accolades whereas if she, being a woman, practices, she is equated with a *tava'if* (courtesan).

That a woman can either be the devil incarnate of the angel personified, is a trope that has been presented in innumerable texts, both, written and oral and this could be due to the influence of religion and mythology on popular Hindi cinema. Bedi argues that the role of a wife or woman is not only to devote herself to household and child-rearing; it is her right to indulge in hobbies (like singing in Salma's case) without being judged for it by society. Another interesting character is that of a *paan*-seller named Maraati who represents the capitalistic man. It is revealed that the only reason he rented that house to Hamid was because he knew Salma could sing well and once she became a famous courtesan, his business would once again begin thriving as people who frequented courtesans were usually fond of consuming *paan* and other intoxicants. The main aims of Progressive Writers were - subverting gender norms, raising anti-colonial awareness, and opposing capitalism, and *Dastak* deals with two of these themes in a poignant manner. Bedi's realistic writing and direction, sans emotional melodrama, make this film a relevant commentary on the socio-political condition of the times. Madhulika Liddle writes in her blog, "This is an amazing film: poignant, very real, at times highly emotional, at times so restrained and contained that one wonders if it's even the same film—until one remembers that life is often like that, too".

Women occupy a central position in Bedi's stories as he tries to break the normatives by providing unique perspectives on women and their psyches. He depicts his female characters as complex individuals, rather than typical female leads of mainstream Indian cinema who served merely as visual sensations or supporting characters to male protagonists. Instead of serving as an instrument of pleasure, Bedi's woman is a living, breathing individual with a robust capacity for independent thought and struggles of her own.

> … in an industry that has a very sparse number of women behind the camera, it can be assumed that the portrayal of

> women onscreen by male directors and other male professionals will have gender biases and constraints and this may not always convey women's world views, perceptions and subjective realities. The roles played by the women onscreen are mostly the male director's notion of what roles women ought to be playing. This notion is based on the director's beliefs, attitudes and values, combined with the director's perception of the viewers' demand (Sarkar 3).

Mainstream Hindi cinema upheld and reinforced the traditional patriarchal views of society; Bedi, like other Progressives, challenged established gender norms by highlighting the absurdity of the so-called masculine ideals through his male characters. The character of Shanta's husband, Gopal in *Phāgun* (1973) is a struggling writer who does not mind living at his father-in-law's house but leaves his wife and responsibilities only because his masculine pride is hurt. Similarly, in other films, Bedi questions the established notions of masculinity through his male characters. In *Dastak*, Hamid does not mind getting appreciative glances from his female colleagues but when the same is afforded to his wife, he is livid. In *Phāgun*, Shanta's father clings to his pride and high social status even as his daughter's happiness remains at stake. Dr Suman, Shanta's son-in-law states rather authoritatively that it is not a woman's place to have love interests, commenting upon one of the 'modern' girls at the medical college while in an extramarital love affair himself. Bedi sought to redefine prevalent gender norms in society by highlighting the absurdity of defining and limiting roles in society based on gender.

Rajinder Singh Bedi who belonged to this generation of experimental filmmakers, dared to question the reality of the established heroine archetype who instead of being depicted as normal individuals were placed on a pedestal made of unachievable ideals. Their emotions, grievances, feelings, ambitions, and desires had been completely overlooked, and they appear almost otherworldly. He was one in an array of regional writers as directors in the mid-1960s, whose works challenged the formulae reigning in Mumbai-based Hindi commercial cinema, to usher in the phase of New Wave Cinema, Alternate Cinema, or Parallel Cinema. These directors were brave enough to experiment with realism and break the conventions of commercial cinema by bringing to the forefront issues of poverty, gender-based violence, unemployment, illiteracy, etc. More importantly, these filmmakers were not hesitant in portraying men and women as individuals rather than stereotypes.

Bedi took it upon himself to redefine women. Instead of responding to them as objects of the male gaze, he elevated them as individuals with

agency to dismantle stereotypes. He believed that women's experiences and dilemmas must become central points of narration and go beyond the prevalent stereotypes to affect real change in the status of women in Indian society. In *Garam Coat*, Geeta is not of a meek and self-sacrificing middle-class housewife, instead, she proves herself capable of sharing her husband's struggles and making important decisions. In one of the scenes, Girdhari rebukes her for taking the flour home to feed their children instead of offering it in a temple. She sharply replies that the flour would better serve as food for their hungry children, thus challenging the validity of man-made religious customs. In *Ānkhon Dekhī*, Bedi reflects on the effect of caste on gender roles thereby rousing another important conversation. In *Dastak,* Salma is an accomplished musician who struggles to find her place as a respectable woman in a society which sees women engaged in singing or dancing as having loose morals. She loves her husband and does not shy away from openly expressing her affection.

Besides portraying amorous relationships between the young and married, he also portrayed the sexuality of the elderly, a subject largely overlooked in Hindi cinema primarily because of the taboo associated with feelings of sexual nature as one grows old. The concept of old age is a complex subject which has been discussed by a large number of thinkers, most of who agree that to grow old means to live in either of the two extremes – to live constantly with feelings of loss and abandonment, or to live engaged in a lot of activity by breaking stereotypes and rejecting the established norms of old age.

Bedi's films challenge the stereotype of older people as asexual beings and present intimacy and sexuality as a part of life. *Phāgun* is remarkable for its accurate portrayal of old age; the older characters in the film are not mere stereotypes, but individuals with active desires and feelings. This is most evident in a scene from the film where a group of older men go out on a walk to the beach and indulge in friendly banter which revolves around intimacy and growing old at the same time. As they look at women bathing in the sea or engaging in acts of love with their partners, they turn into a bunch of giggling men who take pleasure in such voyeuristic activities. Bedi broke away from stereotyping the elderly in an industry where sexuality is largely associated with youth and beauty.

Another noteworthy aspect of Bedi's films is his depiction of the human psyche. Bedi was highly influenced by Chekhov, Maupassant, Chedrin, Hemingway, and Faulkner, and wanted to explore the workings of the mind. He mentions in an interview to *Mahfil*:

> in Hemingway, within ninety-six pages, he has given us life, entirely. He has imbibed in himself all the great writers of the

> world: Chekhov, for his compassion; Tolstoy, for his expense; Maupassant, for his effect, and so on. And he, to my mind, is a very great artist who looks back to the old dictum that all art is suggestion. He's not tempted to sloganize. (www.jstor.org 140)

The topic of mental health forms an important part of his works; in *Phagun,* Shanta is supported, while she is going through emotional trauma, by Dr Effendi, her family doctor, who not only consoles Shanta but also warns her father that his controlling attitude is turning her into a paranoid and neurotic being. Torn between the contemptuous behaviour of her father and the idealistic ambitions of her writer-husband, she ultimately ends up estranged from her husband and raising her daughter all alone. Despite the unfortunate circumstances, she raises her daughter to be strong and independent instead of a typically weak woman lacking agency. However, conflict arises as her daughter gets married and she tries to look for a husband-like figure in her son-in-law. Driven by loneliness, she goes to live with the young couple, making her daughter feel insecure and encroaching upon the young couple's privacy. While the daughter is aware of her mother's lack and temperament, she does not let her respect for her mother overshadow rational behaviour. The film ends with the realisation on Shanta's part that much like her parents, her over-interference in her children's married life is the cause of their unhappiness. The complex single-parent-child relationship is examined in the film in a sensitive manner to make the viewers realize that relationships must be handled with sensitivity and rationale.

Just like the Italian, French and British New Wave cinema, new features were introduced to Indian cinema as well. These writers and directors of realistic cinema shot their films at a low cost in real locations. They were not hesitant to depict ill-lit poverty-stricken houses in shabby areas as they thought it necessary to portray their real characters in real situations. The bleak and dingy locations enabled such films to portray accurate living conditions of the common working class, unlike the mainstream films which were shot in well-furnished studios with professional actors. Rajinder Singh Bedi arrived in the Indian film industry at a time when films had lost touch with the lives of the common man and filmmakers stuck largely to formulas which were aesthetically pleasing to the audiences. The film industry had stereotyped the ideals of beauty which left no space for the poor, deprived and marginalized. Bedi, redefined the standards of beauty and re-examined the ideals of society by bringing the common man and the common woman and their ordinary concerns to the centre. Much like the original Progressives, he believed that,

> literature which does not arouse in us a critical spirit, or satisfy our spiritual and intellectual needs, which is not 'force-giving' and dynamic, which does not awaken our sense of beauty, which does not make us face the grim realities of life in a spirit of determination, has no use for us today. It cannot even be termed as literature (Premchand 83).

He was highly critical of extremist beliefs of social realism and propagated non-political, social, moral and intellectual advancement of society through his works. He believed that cinema must create a separate and independent space for the marginalized and deprived as its only end is not to entertain. Films must aim to bring about social change and accelerate the process of modernity, instead of sticking to specific formulas to justify their huge impact on society. That Bedi has had a significant impact on cinema and literature is something which cannot be denied; however, it is also interesting to note that he influenced his contemporaries to create masterpieces in cinema and literature as well. In a session dedicated to Rajinder Singh Bedi at the Jashn-e Rekhta 2016 annual festival, titled *Rajinder Singh Bedi: Insani Rishton ka Razdan*, (Rajinder Sing Bedi: Confidant of Human Relationships) a prominent screenplay writer, director, theatre and art critic revealed that while she was working on *Ek Chadar Maili Si* with Bedi, he advised her to make a film based on Muslim families who remained in India after Partition. He suggested that she should collaborate with Ismat Chughtai on the project and subsequently the film *Garam Hawa* was made.

Rajinder Singh Bedi has received praise for his exactness of dialogues and actions. Nothing in his films was extra or improper; every word, action, and character had a well-defined space and need of its own. He created unforgettable characters who were matchless in the reality of their emotions; the audience cannot help but empathize with their plight as they can sense a connection with the person on screen, understanding that it is possible that they might themselves be facing or have faced those emotions at some point in their life. Bedi was a true Progressive as his work measures up to the aims established by the Progressive Writers' Movement vis a vis simplicity of language and style, use of colloquial diction, and disguising criticism into an analysis of socio-political conditions of the working class. He engaged in analysing his characters psychologically who were aggravated due to sexual deprivation and urbanisation to reveal the motives behind their actions; in *Dastak* and *Phagun*, we see how the subconscious i.e. the innermost instincts and desires of the characters influenced their nature and behaviour.

We can find echoes of Chekhov in his stories laden with sympathy sans

sentimentality. Unlike the Progressives who sought to alleviate the maladies of society through their writing, Bedi has been accused of merely portraying such illnesses rather than offering possible remedies for their correction. Yuri Corrigan remarks, "Amongst his contemporary writers, many of whom were eager to offer their own solutions to the cultural crises of the time, Chekhov was both loved and hated for his ostensible moral agnosticism." (68) Bedi too has been accused of delving too deep into despair and melancholia, something which the Progressives often disapproved of. His heroines have been accused of suffering abuse silently instead of standing up to their oppressors, however, it is important to look at his works from the lens of the times. When Bedi wrote and directed, it was uncommon for women to speak up for themselves; he simply depicted reality without offering any solutions for the problems. However, in the manner in which he portrays the tribulations of his characters and the dreariness of everyday life, the audience is compelled to introspect and rectify the wrongs in society.

Although he is remembered by his family as a jovial and humorous man, he felt deeply for those who suffered. His niece Nischint recalls in a blog, "...everyone said about him that he was moved to tears very easily. He would begin to narrate a story he had written himself and would have trouble finishing it because he would be so choked up" (Liddle). Bedi drew inspiration from commonplace and everyday life, including portraits of diverse individuals from all classes and backgrounds in his works. Thus, it comes as no surprise that his stories are remembered for their depiction of the complexity and versatility of human beings and his characters' love, compassion and humanity are their defining characteristics.

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